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PEOPLE Are Left Confused By Continuing Controversy Over Nation's Defense

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WASHINGTON — The defense picture is currently the hottest controversy in Congress, and because the consequences of U. S. defense policies are so grave, the issue has caused genuine alarm among many respected members of the 86th Congress.

Never in this reporter's memory has such a spectacle presented itself in the national capital. In a period stretching back to the end of World War II, over which this reporter has closely followed the Washington scene, never have so many prominent military figures criticized our official, all-important defense policies as is happening today.

The military figures are joined by the Central Intelligence Agency's chief, Allen Dulles, and — of course — they are joined more strongly by prominent Democratic members of Congress. While one must allow for political considerations in this barrage of criticism from the Democratic party, it

would be wrong to attribute the testimony of top military officials to politics—for they have all to lose and nothing to gain, personally, in such criticisms.

"Germans were beaten long ago," Werner Von Braun, renowned rocket scientist, began protesting, almost bitterly, more than a year ago. Various committee reports, including the Gaither Committee, contained clear warnings that we were dropping behind in the vital missile and rockets race.

Gen. Maxwell Taylor, the former chief of staff of the Army, issued a bombshell warning — to dignified and restrained terms — both before and after he resigned. Gen. John Medaris, echoed those warnings.

Gen. Thomas Power says, Gen. Thomas Power, of SAC, warned that our defense policies were not completely realistic, especially concerning attack alerts. Gen. Bernard Schriever, Air Force missiles and research expert, also gave Congress highly disturbing testimony.

In recent days, Adm. Arleigh Burke, chief of naval operations, has called for a major speed-up in the Polaris program. Thus, all services are urging that our defense program be brought into a more realistic pattern. Even though the Administration, in the past, has quietly rapped the knuckles of a number of top military figures who have independently voiced their criticisms of our defense posture.

In addition, to all this, the Military Air Transport Service has struggled unsuccessfully for years to acquire jets in its military logistic and support operations. While other countries, such as Russia, Great Britain and Canada, have

military logistic and transport modern aircraft, the Air Force still has no jets for MATS — because of pressure from the very bus commercial airlines.

The warnings from Democratic politicians are partly discounted and President Eisenhower has taken a slap at some of these critics in recent days. This is an election year, and it is regrettable that the security of the nation has become involved in political exchanges, which could be partly motivated by personal ambition.

On the other hand, one of the Administration's major defense policy critics in the U. S. Senate, Sen. Stuart Symington, issued a threat a few days ago which he was in a position to back up. He warned that unless the Administration discontinues its allegations that attacks on defense policy were politically inspired, he would reveal certain secret information which has not yet been made public. It is understood that this information was given to senators in a closed-door session by the chief of the Central Intelligence Agency.

The disturbing part of the general picture which is not a subject of dispute is the admitted fact that we are behind the Russians in the intercontinental ballistics field. Even Administration defense officials admit that the Russians will have an ICBM superiority of 3-1 over us by next year.

The fact that more alarming estimates have been given does not alter the basic and disturbing truth that we are behind, and are not expected to catch up in the next year or two. Certainly this should be disturbing when the ICBM is the weapon of the future — as admitted by practically all top defense officials.

Were it not for the fact that the President of the United States is a renowned and famous general, who considers himself an

expert in the defense field, and who has recently rebuked reporters with a reminder of his knowledge in this field, the nation would probably be thoroughly alarmed. However a surprising calm prevails in many quarters — which is among those who are genuinely alarmed over what they consider to be an extremely grave situation.

President Eisenhower has been upset in recent days, because of criticism, and one example was the secret testimony of Allen Dulles before a congressional committee. It is reported that the President ordered a verbatim transcript of this testimony and that it was a source of anger to him. Yet the President has not publicly rebuked Dulles, and generally refrains from publicly rebuking military officials who testify before Congress. (He came very close to violating this rule last week, when he took a slap at SAC's Commanding General, although not mentioning General Power's name.)

Usually, the President leaves it to the civilian service chiefs, of various Defense Department heads, or — in some cases — the Chief of Staff of the service involved, to refute criticisms of defense policies.

The charges and replies, on behalf of the Eisenhower Administration, have flown so thick and fast, in the last year or two that it is difficult for the average citizen to know just who is right and what to believe. Many find it difficult to believe that a distinguished general and President would allow this country to fall behind in the vital defense field, but this is what has happened, and certainly an "herculean" crash program is clearly indicated on the basis of evidence which has been accumulating now for several years.